

Ehle House  
(Fort Ehle)  
Nelliston  
Montgomery County  
New York

HABS No. NY 3104

HABS  
NY,  
29-NEL,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District 3 of New York

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared by Washington Office

Ehle House  
(Fort Ehle)  
A quarter mile north from the Mohawk River  
near the Old Kings Highway  
Palatine Bridge vicinity  
Montgomery County  
New York

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An addendum to  
Fort Ehle  
Welliston, Montgomery County  
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in HABS Catalog (1941)

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EHLE HOUSE (Fort Ehle)

An Addendum to  
Fort Ehle  
Nelliston  
Montgomery County  
New York  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Location: Located a quarter mile north from the Mohawk River near the Old Kings Highway, Palatine Bridge vicinity, Montgomery County, New York.

Present Owner: Not known, the house is in ruins.

Present Use: Vacant, in ruins.

Significance: The Ehle House, built in 1727 and 1752, was the house of Dominie Johannes Jacobus Ehle, a missionary to the Indians in the Mohawk Valley. Built of flat field stone with fine details this simple structure survived the French-Indian and Revolutionary Wars.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. History of Structure:

The Ehle House was built by Dominie Johannes Jacobus Ehle and his son, Petrus, in the eighteenth century. Dominie Ehle was born in Germany circa 1690 and emigrated to England around 1709, due to religious persecution. In August 1722 he was ordained in the ministry by the Bishop of London. Later that year he was sent to America by the Church of England, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. In America he settled in the Mohawk Valley where he was a missionary to the Indians in the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys. The one-story section of the house was built around 1727 and served as a mission for the Indians. The one-and-a-half story addition was built in 1752 by Ehle's son Petrus. The date and Petrus' initials were in a round recess surrounded by brick on the south gable end.

The Ehle House withstood the French-Indian and Revolutionary Wars. Dominie Ehle's grandson, Peter P. Ehle, moved his family from the house to a location nearer the road in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is conjectured that the house was used for a time by tenant farmers. By the early

1900s the house was deteriorating. An effort was made to preserve the house in 1933 when the Montgomery County Historical Society put on a new roof. In 1941, Ehle's Fort (near the house) was blasted away to deepen the Barge Canal and in a few years the walls of the house fell in.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views:

In 1886 Rufus Grider made illustrations of the house. The detailed drawings describe both the interior and exterior of the house and are accompanied with written explanations. They can be found in the State Library at Albany, New York.

Two photographs are in a book by W. Max Reed. The Mohawk Valley: Its Legends and Its History. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press (1901). The photos show the east elevation and a window detail.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Albany, New York. Historic Sites Bureau, New York State Parks and Recreation. Manuscript on Ehle House by Lois Feister

Fonda, New York. Montgomery County Department of History and Archives. Original Patent from the Mohawk Nation to Ehl and Dreissen, May 9, 1732.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Ehle, Boyd. Dominie John Jacob Ehle and his Descendants. St. Johnsville, New York: Enterprise and News, 1930.

Lupo, Ruth. Waymarks in Nelliston 1878-1978. Nelliston, New York: Nelliston Community Group, 1978.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The one story, 1727, section was constructed of flat field stone and roofed with hewn pine rafters and split shingles. A door and window with shutters were on each side; the arches were out of stone. The

interior consisted of a large room with a fireplace at the northern end. The one-and-a-half story addition was also constructed of field stone with mousetoothing at the gable ends. The door and window arches of this later section were of brick. This section contained sixteen loopholes around the windows and doors as a measure of defense, although there is no indication that the house was used as a fort. The interior was composed of two floors with a deep basement and a hearth at either end. The brick for the chimney and the finishing lumber were brought from Schenectady, New York (Ehle, page 6).

Prepared by Mary Beth Betts  
Historic American Buildings  
Survey  
February 1979

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical and architectural data, prepared by Mary Beth Betts in 1979, was completed under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS. The photograph of the Ehle House from the southeast was taken in 1936 by an unknown photographer. The 1937 photographs of the house were taken by Thomas T. Waterman.